

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

23169

October 29, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Harold H. Saunders *hhs*

SUBJECT: Your Meeting with Tunisian Foreign Minister Masmoudi --
4:00 p.m. October 29

Arrangements

Foreign Minister Masmoudi will bring with him his #2 in the Foreign Ministry, Abdel-Aziz Lasram, and Ambassador El Goulli. Masmoudi has flown back from New York today just to see you.

The interpreter, Alec Toumayan, can translate simultaneously if you can arrange for him to sit next to you. [This saves time.]

→ Yesterday, Masmoudi opened his meeting with Secretary Rogers with a 55-minute statement of his views. I suggest you take command of the conversation at the outset by saying:

--You are familiar with what he said to Secretary Rogers yesterday.
[see below]

--You would like to ask his views on some specific points and then you would be glad to discuss any points he might want to make.

What Is on Masmoudi's Mind

Masmoudi made the following major points to Secretary Rogers:

--He feels that there is a real possibility for peace in the Middle East but everything depends on the U.S. and Israel. The U.S. will have to press the Israelis to be more forthcoming if there is to be chance for peace settlement.

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--Any peace settlement must take fully into account the desires of the Palestinians. The Arabs, Israelis and the U. S. must recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and make provision for a "Palestinian homeland" if any peace settlement is to stick over the long term.

--He feels very strongly that our presence in the Mediterranean should remain and not be decreased. His main concern is the growing Soviet role and presence.

More specifically--though he will probably not mention this to you--Tunisia is concerned with the declining level of U. S. economic assistance [they want more PL480 than we have been able to promise] and U. S. inability to provide anything like the kind of military assistance they would like. [They have a shopping list worth \$50-60 million, and our whole MAP appropriation for all Africa is only \$20 million with \$3 million programmed for Tunisia.]

Talking Points

1. We understand the point that President Bourguiba and the Foreign Minister have made--that legitimate Palestinian concerns must be met if there is to be a lasting peace settlement. What we still have difficulty understanding is exactly how the Tunisians envision a process that could take Palestinian concerns into account. For instance:

--What do the Palestinians want that is achievable? [They say they want a binational Palestine, but that seems unlikely to happen. What can they honorably settle for?]

--How do Palestinian aspirations and the future of Jordan relate?

--Who can speak for all the Palestinians? Do the fedayeen leaders fairly represent them?

2. The U. S. tried to demonstrate in September that it remains actively and intimately concerned with the preservation of freedom in the Mediterranean.

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--How does the Minister see European participation in this process evolving?

3. The U.S. wants to continue working with Tunisia in the military and economic assistance fields to the extent our resources permit. The Minister understands the difficulties the Administration has in getting adequate appropriations from the Congress. Tunisia should understand that the level of assistance that is possible is not a measure of the Administration's attitude toward Tunisia. [You may recall that the President in his talk with their Foreign Minister Bourguiba, Jr., a year ago at the UN indicated sympathy with Tunisia's military assistance needs.]

A State Department memo with a biographic paragraph ^{m.c.} on Masmoudi is attached. He is a possible successor to President Bourguiba. He speaks only French.

